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UT Environmental Education Partnership Receives Federal Funding

The Utah Society for Environmental Education (USEE) has received two years of additional funding through the national Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP) to further develop the Utah Environmental Education Certification Program. The grant will help to implement and enhance a professional certification program based on national competency guidelines. The professional certification will be available to environmental educators throughout Utah. USEE will receive \$60,000 to support their work through September, 2005.

The Utah Environmental Education Certification Program was developed over the past three years to provide a voluntary, sustainable effort that will ensure quality environmental education throughout the state. “We have pilot tested the certification program, and this additional funding will help us to enhance the project and further develop the mentor program” said Jennifer Visitacion, Utah’s EETAP Project Manager. “Mentors, individuals who have already been certified through the program, will serve as an important step in assessing the competencies of new participants and helping them to complete the program. In addition, mentors will help to publicize the importance of having a certification program,” said Visitacion.

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Utah and seven other states received financial support to advance environmental education at the state level. These eight states receive federal funds through the Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP) based at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

“We have seen important steps toward a sustainable certification program in the first two years of the EETAP grant,” said Visitacion. “We will build on that base working with new certification applicants to recognize quality environmental educators in Utah.”

The National Environmental Education Advancement Project (NEEAP), one of eight national EETAP partners, manages the EETAP States Program. “Utah is a national leader in the development of a professional certification program in the environmental education field,” said Jeremy Higgins, NEEAP Outreach Coordinator. “It is exciting to see their initial success, and important to promote this program with educators and administrators throughout the state.”

For more information about NEEAP or capacity building related activities, visit the website <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/neeap/>.

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